FY24 RECOMMENDED OPERATING BUDGET HIGHLIGHTS

Climate Change and Environmental Sustainability...

✪ Provide $19.3 million for the Montgomery County Green Bank to promote investment in energy efficiency, renewable energy, and other projects that will lower the County's carbon footprint and make the County more resilient to the effects of climate change.

✪ Plan a solar microgrid project to support zero emission bus fueling at the Gaithersburg bus depot. The microgrid will provide clean energy to charge electric buses or to generate green hydrogen for use in hydrogen fuel cell buses.

✪ Expand the County's climate change efforts, including new positions for residential electrification, solar power expertise, and to manage County-based grant and incentive programs. New operating support includes funds to advance Community Choice Energy Consultant Support, climate grants for community organizations, and for management of an electric vehicle purchasing co-op. Included new funding to enhance the Tree Montgomery program and a new position to help manage the increased rate of tree plantings.

✪ Purchase grant funded hydrogen fuel cell buses and construct a green hydrogen fueling site in Gaithersburg. The Federal grant award will enable the replacement of 13 diesel-fueled buses in the Ride On fleet with zero-emission, hydrogen powered buses.

✪ Partner with the United States Army Corps of Engineers to conduct flood risk management studies in four priority watersheds to provide the County with plans for reducing the risk of flooding to property owners and critical roadways. This study will occur under the Planning Assistance to States (PAS) program, which is designed to provide planning-level assistance to communities and partners for water resource related issues.

✪ Accelerate the County's waste reduction efforts through increased staffing, including new reuse initiatives, adding to the kinds of materials that can be recycled, and increasing recycling at multi-family properties.

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✪ Increase Bikeshare maintenance to extend the life of stations by replacing obsolete ecoboards. Ecoboards serve as the operational intelligence of each Bikeshare station.

✪ Install new LED light fixtures in additional parking garages to improve lighting and energy efficiency.

✪ Support the Urban Areas Heat Mapping Project grant from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Climate Program to map heat inequities and support decision making in neighborhoods grappling with inequitably distributed impacts from the deadliest weather-related risk in the United States.

✪ Add new funding and new positions to identify and address illegal discharge of pollutants throughout the County, and to ensure the County's stormwater management structures are inspected and maintained.

✪ Explore opportunities to install solar photovoltaic systems on garage rooftops within the parking lot districts (PLDs) that can provide discounted electricity to lower and moderate income (LMI) communities in the County as well as County-owned facilities.

✪ Enter Phase II of the development of Watershed Assessments for the County to better understand changes over time to our watershed, determine current conditions, adapt our management strategies, and help clearly guide the County's actions moving forward.

✪ Coordinate the efforts of Tree Montgomery Program and the Stormwater Best Management Practice (BMP) Inspection and Maintenance Program to identify BMPs on public and private properties where trees can be planted, enhancing the stormwater treatment function and habitat.

✪ Install street level, recycling, education signs in the Bethesda Urban District at recycling bins in high traffic areas.

✪ Continue with the Ford Mach-E electric vehicle pilot program for the Montgomery County Police Department to explore the suitability of electric vehicles for police patrol use. Wide-scale availability of zero-emissions patrol vehicles is expected by 2025.

✪ The Wheaton Urban District partnered with One Montgomery Green in support of the Wheaton Sustainability Innovation Zone to build and maintain sustainable innovation ecosystems for climate and energy technologies.

✪ Pilot a program with the Montgomery County Fire and Rescue Service using a Ford F150 Lightning as a Battalion Chief Vehicle, including on-site charging, to explore the suitability of electric vehicles for this role.

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- ✪ Expand the residential curbside food scraps collection pilot project with additional homes in the Potomac and Montgomery Village areas, and expand the residential backyard and commercial food scraps recycling programs by adding more partners.

- ✪ Plant 1,200 street trees along roads and sidewalks that are adjacent to private residences and other locations to increase canopy coverage. The Chesapeake Bay Trust (CBT) Urban Trees Grant Program awarded the Department of Transportation (MCDOT) a grant for $362,740 to increase tree canopy in urban and underserved areas of the County.

Racial Equity & Social Justice...

- ✪ Include funding to plan and coordinate the Juneteenth event in the County.

- ✪ Expand community partnerships to deploy an additional 32,000 free laptop computers to low-income seniors and families living in affordable housing developments, enroll 20,000 families in the Affordable Connectivity broadband subsidy program (ACP), and seek additional Maryland and Federal broadband grant funding to expand MoCoNet, the County's residential broadband network at affordable housing developments.

- ✪ Fund a civilian Diversity Equity and Inclusion Officer position to support efforts to normalize conversations on equity and operationalize new equity centered practices, policies, and procedures in the Fire and Rescue Service (FRS). This enhancement implements a recommendation of the recently completed MCFRS equity assessment.

- ✪ Provide one-time funding of $4.7 million for COVID testing, vaccination administration, and outbreak management and $1.0 million for COVID sheltering in hotels for isolation of COVID positive or exposed people who are experiencing homelessness.

- ✪ Recommend an increase of $800,000 for the African American Health Program, $952,545 for the Latino Health Initiative, and $775,000 for the Asian American Health Initiative. This increase supports the minority health programs that provide effective, culturally and linguistically appropriate services to improve health outcomes and alleviate health disparities.

- ✪ Continue efforts to increase the number of groups awarded a subsidy for facility fees through either the Facility Fee Assistance Program (FFAP) or the Community Access Program (CAP).

- Develop and maintain a resource guide for Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) farmers that will also be incorporated into web pages on the Office of Agriculture website, which will provide farmers an opportunity to use the translation services that are built into the website.

- Create a data analyst position in the Office of Racial Equity and Social Justice to help implement the Racial Equity and Social Justice (RESJ) Act requirement to produce a Racial Equity dashboard, establish metrics, and work with departments and the community to determine which metrics should be measured.

- Address the racial inequities and disparities present in all aspects of the food system through the collaborative efforts of the Office of Food Systems Resilience and the Office of Racial Equity and Social Justice.

- Implement recommendations made by the Effective Law Enforcement for All (ELE4A) Final Report for the Department of Police. The recommendations include adding six Public Safety Firearms Instructors at the Police Safety Training Academy, a Program Manager II dedicated to health and wellness, and an Emergency Services Instructor.

- Add $100,000 to purchase World Language collections for the Public Libraries, beginning with Spanish and Chinese.

- Implement a Police Survey Platform, primarily focusing on Communications Center callers, to comply with Bill 45-20, Community Policing - Data, while promoting equity and inclusion.

Thriving Youth and Families...

- Increase Excel Beyond the Bell Elementary (EEBE) services and expand existing out of school time programming with the addition of two new sites: Harriet Tubman and Watkins Mills Elementary Schools.

- Continue funding for award winning Black History, African Heritage, and Public Meeting cable television programming highlighting the rich cultural heritage and diversity of Montgomery County.

- Provide initial funding of $6.1 million to continue the Food Staples Program, as needed.

- Continue services previously funded by Federal funds in the Department of Health and Human Services, including $3.0 million for the Service Consolidation Hubs, $1.7 million in Eviction Prevention, and $711,891 for a Mobile Health Clinic.

- ✪ Allocate $75,000 to expand Montgomery County Public Libraries' early childhood literacy programs and outreach for children from ages 0 to 5.

- ✪ Build community partnerships and leverage open-source tools to target distribution of 50,000 free laptop computers to low-income residents.

- ✪ Commit $2.0 million to enhance the Montgomery Cares clinic reimbursement rate.

- ✪ Expand the TeenWorks youth development program, which provides job readiness training and skill building workshops.

- ✪ Continue free Recreation fitness passes for Montgomery County residents to enjoy game rooms, fully equipped fitness rooms, and gym activities.

- ✪ Provide funding for a new Linkages to Learning and School Based Health Center at Southlake Elementary School.

- ✪ Implement a new Youth in Public Spaces pilot program in Silver Spring to find safe ways for young people to have fun in the community.

- ✪ Expand the State's Autism Waiver Program within the County.

A Growing Economy…

- ✪ Rebranded the Business Advancement Team to the County's Business Center with a redesigned website that helps answer local business questions quickly and a greater focus on proactive outreach and engagement with the County's small businesses.

- ✪ Attract businesses to the White Oak Science Gateway by developing a marketing plan for a new website, pamphlets, brochures, and branding.

- ✪ Purchase a Customer Relationship Management System that will focus on tracking the County's interactions with the business community to ensure faster, more reliable customer service.

- ✪ Increase the capacity of the County's Business Center to proactively assist and engage small businesses throughout the County resulting in more businesses that start, grow, and stay in the County.

- ✪ Support proactively processing fire code compliance permit renewals to better prioritize inspections.

- ✪ Continue ABS partnerships with multiple brands to introduce and support minority-

and female-owned products.

⭐ Provided through the Business Center more than $5.1 million in direct business grants and loans. Several of these business grants, like the Small Business Rental Assistance Program, provided critical funding for businesses still negatively impacted by the pandemic.

⭐ Pilot a hybrid curb management solution with single-space meters and Pay-by-Cell only zones in the parking districts.

⭐ Introduce new vehicle occupancy and counting systems in various high-demand parking garages in Bethesda and Silver Spring and upgrade outdated vehicle counting systems.

⭐ Convert garages in Silver Spring to modern Master Meter systems that can use Pay-by-Cell apps and Pay-by-Plate options.

Easier Commutes...

⭐ Increase the number of traffic signals evaluated per year in the Traffic Signal Optimization Program to reduce vehicle delays and traffic congestion resulting from inadequate signal timing. This will enable the County to advance a four to six-year traffic signal review cycle, which is near the industry standard of three to five years, and move away from a 12 to 14-year review cycle. MCDOT is on target to review and replace 50 traffic signals this fiscal year.

⭐ Expand the EV Charging Station program (including Pepco supported stations) in existing and additional facilities.

⭐ Allocate funding for the Bethesda Circulator to provide zero- emissions electric buses for this service.

⭐ Maintain a reduction in every Call-n-Ride participant's monthly co-payment by $5.25 through financial support from the Transportation Services Improvement Fund. This co-pay subsidy has been supported in the past four years by a grant from the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments which is expiring in February 2024. New funding for this benefit will continue to provide affordable transportation for the lowest income residents.

An Affordable, Welcoming County for a Lifetime...

- ✪ Allocate $89.6 million for affordable housing, including $57.6 million in the Montgomery Housing Initiative (MHI) Fund and $32 million in the Affordable Housing Acquisition and Preservation CIP project. This dedicated funding provides for the renovation of distressed housing, the acquisition and preservation of affordable housing units, creation of housing units for special needs residents, homeowner down payment assistance, services to the Building Neighborhoods to Call Home, Design for Life, and Housing First programs, and the creation of mixed-income housing.

- ✪ Allocate $30.2 million from loan repayments to the Preservation of Naturally Occurring Affordable Housing (NOAH) Fund to continue housing preservation efforts in areas at risk of rent escalation to higher market rents, including the Purple Line Corridor and other County transit corridors.

- ✪ Continue investment in the Moderately Priced Housing Unit (MPDU) program. It is the first mandatory inclusionary zoning law program in the United States.

- ✪ Add $3.0 million for overflow sheltering in hotels, housing an average of 138 people every night.

- ✪ Preserve and produce affordable housing by underwriting loans. Three developments for multi-family projects have already been identified for potential funding in FY24. These developments would preserve or produce a total of 590 units, including 412 affordable units.

- ✪ Increase staffing in various programs to enhance the Department of Housing and Community Affairs' operations and service delivery related to rental licensing, housing code enforcement, and landlord-tenant mediation to support increasing demand and provide more effective services.

- ✪ Continue the Homeowner Assistance Program for down payment assistance to first-time homebuyers, including full-time career employees of Montgomery County and Montgomery County Public Schools.

- ✪ Invest $1.7 million in the Housing Initiative Program and $300,000 to the Permanent Supportive Housing Program to avoid a reduction in service.

- ✪ Continue funding for the Focused Neighborhood Assistance (FNA) program that provides financial and technical assistance to neighborhoods to improve the quality of life, safety and welfare of their residents.

- ✪ Implement a robust legal immigration service referral and data collection system housed at the Gilchrist Immigrant Resource Center.

- ✪ Include funding to develop a Faith-Based Housing Development Initiative pilot project by working with mission-aligned houses of worship to increase the supply

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of affordable housing for low- and moderate-income households and advance racial equity in the County.

✪ Provide additional resources to offset discontinued Federal funds for tenants to access legal assistance, counseling, and education services.

✪ Recommend funding for a Legal Services Coordinator position supporting the "Bienvenidos: Aqui para Ti" initiative led by the Department of Health and Human Services to coordinate legal education, screenings, consultations, wraparound services, and representation for unaccompanied migrant children, asylum seekers and/or families/sponsors.

✪ Continue funding the Design for Life Program to provide for accessibility upgrades in single-family residences.

Safe Neighborhoods...

✪ Increase funding for security grants to $1 million to non-profit and faith-based organizations to augment costs for security personnel or other security planning measures for non-profit organizations located in Montgomery County.

✪ Continue the Leave-Behind Narcan program to minimize opioid overdose deaths by maintaining pre-assembled Narcan kits on every Montgomery County Fire Rescue Service vehicle and at every station.

✪ Implement recommendations from the Infrastructure Safety Analysis for ten locations where the highest number of school bus monitoring program citations were issued.

✪ Add a uniformed Community Action Coordinator and two civilian Community Risk Reduction specialists to deliver targeted prevention and education services including bystander CPR, opiate overdoses, and bleeding control in vulnerable communities. These positions will also ensure communities are connected to sustained services to address their needs in the aftermath of traumatic events.

✪ Add four school crossing guards to enhance student and pedestrian safety.

✪ Support pedestrian safety by reducing the backlog of sidewalk repairs needed in the Silver Spring Urban District.

✪ Implement a Security Camera Program in downtown Silver Spring to enhance crime prevention, offender identification, and to comply with Bill 14-22, Private Security Camera Incentive Program.

✪ Fund a new mobile low/no cost spay and neuter program serving low-income County resident pet owners in their communities in partnership with the Montgomery County Partners for Animal Well-being and Montgomery County Cat Coalition.

✪ Include funding for new wayfinding signage in the Wheaton Urban District to make it easier for pedestrians to navigate the area.

✪ Add a uniformed Critical Incident Stress Management manager and a supervisory psychologist to enhance mental health supports for first responders.

✪ Fund enhancements related to public safety by increasing the inspections of short span bridges and installing a fence on top of the Wayne Avenue garage in Silver Spring.

Effective, Sustainable Government...

✪ Montgomery County received the following National Association of Counties (NACo) Achievement Awards in 2022:

- Active Aging Week: Redefining Active @ Montgomery County, MD
- Adapting Design to Justice Values
- BASIS Workforce Budgeting System
- Brookville Depot - EV Bus Electrification County
- Call-n-Ride Essential Delivery Service
- Cannabis Intoxication Impaired Driving Labs
- Creating Comfortable, Affordable, and Happy Homes for Montgomery County Residents
- Defining the Scope
- Enhancements to Central Vendor Registration System (CVRS) for Individual Payees
- Free COVID-19 Vaccination/Testing/Mask Pick-up Taxi Program
- Improving Language for Inclusive Hiring
- Improving the Customer Service Center: MC311 Address Error Report Form & Tracking
- LEAP4MCG: A New Approach to Hiring People with Disabilities
- Montgomery County Department of Environmental Protection Plogging Challenge
- Montgomery County Safety and Health Program

- Montgomery County, MD's Commercial Food Scraps Recycling Partnership Program
- Notices of Violation and Citations/Court Proceedings - Information Guide
- Play Montgomery Rock N Roll
- Por Nuestra Salud y Bienestar Initiative
- PRO Launch
- Rental Marketplace (Home Page - Marketplace (montgomerycountymd.gov))
- Resiliency: Infrastructure, Energy and Sustainability
- Scotland Recreation Center Resilience Hub
- Service Request Management Map
- Storm Drain Culvert Resiliency Program for Addressing Climate Change
- Streamlined Electronic Invoice Management
- Strengthening Pathways for Advancement in Recreation & Camp Careers (SPARCC)
- Sustainability, Energy, and Mechanical Code Compliance Tools
- Vendor Innovation Portal
- Vendor Process Improvements in Purchasing
- Virtual Alcoholic Beverages License Renewal

✪ Continue expansion of investigation capacity to allow the Office of the Inspector General to manage the requests for review of Montgomery County Public Schools, in accordance with State legislation (Chapter 329 of 2020). Per Bill 11-19, the OIG will also leverage positions added in FY23 to implement a systematic risk-based rotating group by group review of the internal accounting and contracting processes and controls used by each department and principal office in the Executive Branch, as well as audit high-risk County contracts and agreements.

✪ Update all ABS store point of sale register systems to remove technology barriers and enable the addition of services such as curbside pickup, buy online and pick up in store, and queue line checkout.

✪ All Executive Branch departments will develop and implement language access plans, centered around providing high-quality services to the County's multicultural and multilingual communities.

✪ Examine and envision how an investment in Artificial Intelligence (AI) can bring efficiency in decision making and problem solving, enhanced security, and foster effective decision making across the enterprise, by funding AI solutions that boost customer service, resident expectations, and their experiences with government services.

✪ Support the Fleet Management Services' apprentice program in response to hiring

challenges and the need to develop a workforce capable of supporting zero-emission technologies. After completing a 2-year training program, new technicians will be capable of performing skilled maintenance work on the County's fleet of transit buses and heavy equipment. Fleet Management is also working with Montgomery College and the State of Maryland to develop a hiring pipeline and enhance the apprentice training experience.

✪ Continue implementation and outreach efforts of Ban-the-Box laws that prohibits employers and housing providers from asking applicants about criminal history on job or housing applications.

✪ In collaboration with partner agencies, launch government planning processes to establish long-term priorities and strategies for building food system resilience, including increased local food production and enhanced food-based economic opportunity.

✪ Continue to simplify and streamline how MC311 staff answer customer questions over the phone and online, with the cooperation and support of many department operations. This reduces the time customers spend on the phone getting the information they request, and customer satisfaction for callers to MC311 hovers near 90 percent.

✪ Stream live video of election procedures to bolster public confidence.

✪ Continue investments in cybersecurity capabilities to combat increasing and advanced security threats to the County's desktop computers, mobile devices, accounts, and data servers.

✪ The partnership between Civic Design and Montgomery County Police Department (MCPD) has increased the percentage of women in the Academy class, reduced the application process, and increased personalized applicant engagement throughout the process, which candidates state sets MCPD apart from competitors.

✪ Implement Phase II of the DHHS Community Connect Application to allow residents to apply online for major County programs, including Working Parents Assistance, County Health Programs such as Montgomery Cares, Care for Kids, Senior Dental, and the Rental Assistance Program. Bilingual Spanish access, visible status updates to customers on their application processing, and virtual assistance while the customer is using the portal will also be provided.

Funding the Budget...

★ Recommend a total County budget from all sources for all County agencies of $6,832,777,338 which is $486.3 million or 7.7 percent more than the FY23 budget.

★ Recommend tax-supported funding for the Montgomery County Government of $2,504,000,038 (including debt service and OPEB funding).

★ Recommend tax-supported funding for the Montgomery County Government of $2,064,608,598 an increase of 8.9 percent (excluding debt service).

★ Funding for Montgomery County Public Schools will increase $222.3 million or 12.1 percent. Within this total, the County contribution is $264.8 million over maintenance of effort.

★ Funding for Montgomery College's FY24 Recommended Operating Budget totals $345.2 million.

★ Recommend tax-supported funding for the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission (M-NCPPC) increases by $8,091,117 or 5.0 percent from FY23 (including debt service and OPEB funding).

★ Fund the WSSC Water's FY24 operating and capital budgets with a 7.0 percent water and sewer rate increase in accordance with the Spending Affordability Guidelines adopted by Council.

★ Recommended a weighted property tax rate of $1.0785 per $100 of assessed value and a $692 homeowners' property tax credit. The weighted rate includes a $0.10 tax rate that is authorized by Maryland Code, Education § 5-104 (d)(1). The recommended property tax rate is within the County's Charter limit.

★ Promote existing mechanisms for senior citizens and those on limited incomes to assist them as needed with property tax increases, such as the Senior Tax Credit program that benefits eligible residents who are at least 65 years of age. This credit is calculated as 50 percent of the combined State Homeowners' Tax Credit and County Supplement.

★ Retains the energy tax rate at the level approved by the Council for FY23, preserving an important stable and broad-based revenue source that includes Federal institutions that otherwise pay no taxes in exchange for County services.

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